

**Virginia Latino Advisory Board Meeting  
Friday, February 28th  
Patrick Henry Building West Reading Room  
1111 East Broad St., Richmond, VA 23219**

**DRAFT Minutes**

For review and approval by the Board

In Attendance: Cecilia Barbosa (Chair), Karina Kline-Gabel (Vice-Chair), Paul Berry (Secretary), Edgar Aranda-Yanoc, Diana Brown, Damien Cabezas, Eugene Chigna, Juan Espinoza, Melody Gonzales, Alex Guzman, Manuel Leiva, Michael Martinez, Aida Pacheco, Sergio Rimola, Gloria Pena Rockhold, Carmen Romero, , Rodrigo Velasquez, Walewska Watkins, Jorge Yinat

Not in Attendance: Vivian Sanchez Jones (Excused), Cecilia Williams (Excused)

Guests: Delegate Elizabeth Guzman; Secretary Thomasson, John Cano (CASA), Luis Oyola (Legal Aid Justice Center); present for committee working lunch meetings: Secretary Qarni, Secretary Carey, Deputy Secretary Demeria

Staff & Counsel: Maribel Castañeda, Director of Appointments and Director of Latino Outreach; Danielle Campbell, Special Assistant for Advisory Board Administration; Justin Bell, Assistant Attorney General

**Call to Order 9:36 a.m.**

Cecilia Barbosa asked the guests to introduce themselves and then called the meeting formally to order. She then invited Delegate Guzman to give comments on the state of the General Assembly.

Delegate Guzman gave an update on the accomplishments of the General Assembly in 2020 and highlighted the bills that will increase safety and economic development in the Commonwealth. Examples include bills addressed at providing driver's licenses for all Virginia residents and the in-state tuition bill that has passed both chambers. There are two pieces of legislation designed to increase the minimum wage and permit teachers in Virginia to better organize in their places of work. Delegate Guzman elucidated many of the sectors of Virginia's economy where legislation could help working families. One area that was not addressed is expanding Medicaid coverage for pre-natal care to undocumented mothers. She finished her comments with an update and statistics regarding diversity in legal fields and efforts to further increase this.

Cecilia Barbosa reported that Secretary Thomasson and staff had organized a joint advisory board orientation for new board members, thus providing another opportunity for collaboration among the four advisory boards. She (Cecilia Barbosa) described that Secretary Qarni asked her and May Nivar, Chair of the VAAB, to write an op-ed in the Richmond Times Dispatch on English Language Learners, which was published on January 26th. A link to the article is on the VLAB website. Lastly, Senator Hashmi introduced her and May Nivar, Chair of the Virginia Asian Advisory Board (VAAB) in the Senate chamber, giving the Boards additional recognition and visibility for their work.

At the direction of the Board at the last meeting, Cecilia Barbosa sent a letter to Dr. Underwood asking her to consider the right for all eligible Virginia residents to apply for a driver's license, regardless of legal presence, as an important aspect of equity and inclusion that would allow immigrant communities

to more fully participate in all aspects of daily life. Similarly, she sent a second letter to Governor Northam, asking him to give high priority to recruiting the next Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Office Director in the Department of Human Resources Management.

Cecilia Barbosa mentioned that Alex Guzman was recognized in the Richmond Style Weekly 40 Under 40 for his contributions to the community and the Commonwealth, and that Walewska Watkins attended the State of the Union at the invitation of Representative Wexton.

Cecilia Barbosa reported on other members of the Latinx community receiving recent recognition. Tanya Gonzalez, Executive Director of Richmond-based Sacred Heart Center, was selected as one of six Valentine and Community Foundation's 2020 Richmond History Makers. Vilma Seymour, President of the Richmond Region chapter of LULAC, was recognized by the Richmond Times-Dispatch's "Strong Voices," a program honoring women whose vision, impact and commitment have served Richmond and Virginia.

Mike Martinez asked if the bill to increase the number of meetings for VLAB passed into law. Secretary Thomasson stated that meeting limits will be increased effective July 1, 2020. Secretary Thomasson added that the Governor's proposed budget includes funding for the advisory boards.

**Approval of Minutes & Agenda 10:02 a.m.**

**Motion:** Cecilia Barbosa then asked for a motion to adopt the December minutes. Karina Kline-Gabel made the motion and Mike Martinez seconded. All board members present were in favor, with none against and no abstentions.

**Motion:** Cecilia Barbosa then asked for a motion to approve the meeting agenda. Gloria Pena Rockhold made the motion and Mike Martinez seconded. All board members present were in favor, with none against and no abstentions.

**Public Comment 10:05 a.m.**

Luis Oyola, of the Legal Aid Justice Center, presented materials to the board describing enrollment at public colleges in Virginia and the purpose of his attendance: encouraging a policy change by public institutions to give the opportunity to all students in Virginia to attend college regardless of their documentation status. The Legal Aid Justice Center has been working on the in-state tuition issue and he requested that the Board look into removing barriers to access tertiary education institutions in the Commonwealth.

Juan Espinoza opined that there isn't ubiquitous clarity from the state on how to interpret a similar issue, that of "domicile" as it pertains to in-state rates or out of state tuition rates for undocumented students. Similarly, the guidance from the state on attendance has been unclear, and as a result, each tertiary institution interprets and implements its own measures. He further advised that the board work with the Attorney General's office to clarify the guidance, adding that public institutions will likely fall in line with this state-level guidance naturally as a best practice.

John Cano from CASA advocated for passage of legislation granting driver's licenses to all Virginia residents. He elaborated how Driver's Privilege Cards are a less equitable and less practical approach from a policy and economic standpoint. He shared public polling that indicates that the policy

implementing Driver's Licenses is the preferred public legislative option. Cecilia Barbosa asked the Business committee to propose Board action on this topic during their committee time.

**Administrative updates 10:19 a.m.**

Danielle Campbell introduced several new interns in the Governor's office that will be collaborating on VLAB projects. One of their projects is to develop a branding toolkit to advise the public on advisory board work.

Danielle Campbell has been working with advisory board chairs on a comprehensive SOP for all boards. Lastly, she will present dates for the new VLAB meetings per the legislative passage allowing for more meetings; these are tentative and the objective is to finalize them today.

**Latino Outreach Update 10:26 a.m.**

Maribel Castañeda has been working with Latinx organizations throughout the commonwealth that have expressed interest in working with the Governor on different legislative issues. On Jan 16<sup>th</sup> Maribel went to VACOLAO's advocacy day and on Feb 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> she attended the meetings of the VAAB and VAAAB advisory boards' meetings to connect with them on priorities.

She also attended the VA Hispanic Chamber Legislative reception and spoke to Mayor Stoney about connections between the Governor and the Mayor's office on Latinx issues.

Maribel Castañeda stated that there are still many opportunities for individuals to fill vacancies (only 8 of the last 236 applications were from Latinos), and she asked the board to continue to send her names of individuals interested in appointments and events that are relevant to VLAB business and that the Governor can attend. Finally, she is planning to attend an event in Harrisonburg for outreach purposes.

**2020 Census Update 10:40 a.m.**

Aida Pacheco gave an update on the Census 2020 efforts and how the Complete Count Commission is executing the 2020 strategy. She asked the board to continue its outreach efforts and described that she will continue with her engagement with local Census groups. There are monthly calls that the Census 2020 group holds with Secretary Thomasson. The census officially begins receiving census responses on March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

**Legislative Update 10:44 a.m.**

Marvin Figueroa was recently appointed Governor Northam's Legislative Director. He provided updates on the current state of legislation in the General Assembly (GA). He confirmed that he had reviewed the VLAB policy recommendations and will comment on those one by one.

The GA is in session and there are 6 days left to review bills. Several high-priority issues are still under discussion such as redistricting, minimum wage increases, and collective bargaining. The other major issue is the biennial budget, of which there are three versions from the Governor, the House of Delegates, and the Senate, respectively. The Governor is prioritizing affordable housing, funding for ELL teachers, in-state tuition for undocumented students, and eliminating the 40-quarter work requirement for Medicaid eligibility. Medicaid coverage for postpartum treatment was expanded to one year. Legislation still under review includes bills on misclassification of workers, wage theft, and on anti-discrimination in housing and in the workplace.

Karina Kline-Gabel asked about the impacts of the federal change to public charge requirements. Marvin Figueroa responded that anecdotally there has been a chilling effect on the Latino enrollment in SNAP and other public programs. Cecilia Barbosa asked if that data is available and Marvin Figueroa confirmed it is.

Aida Pacheco recommended that more time be given at the next meeting to ask questions about the status of legislation, especially concerning Real ID implementation.

Mike Martinez asked about redistricting and if there is going to be a special session to finalize this. Marvin Figueroa replied that nothing has been announced but the Governor is determining how to move forward.

Carmen Romero asked about the final budget allocation for the affordable housing trust fund. Marvin Figueroa replied that the Governor's budget target of 90 million won't differ too much and that the policy conversation is centering around allocation. The entire GA is committed to increasing funding.

Edgar Aranda-Yanoc asked a question about in-state tuition for undocumented students and when the bill is going to be signed. Marvin responded that the date isn't presently in the calendar.

Edgar Aranda-Yanoc asked a second question about a bill concerning driver's license eligibility expansion, following up on the unanimous recommendation VLAB made at the December meeting to encourage the General Assembly to pass legislation granting Driver's Licenses to all Virginia residents regardless of documentation status. He also wants to address the privacy issue – wants there to be more privacy protections in the bill and would like to know what the Governor's position is on these two issues. Marvin Figueroa replied that different stakeholders such as DMV have been brought into the conversation to ensure that privacy and ease of compliance will eventually be realized, and that the Governor wants the opportunity to sign a bill that allows people to get to work safely and increase economic vitality.

Melody Gonzales asked about calls to action that the board members can adopt. Marvin Figueroa responded that any engagement with the community that informs them and allows the Governor and the executive branch to be better informed on what would best serve the public good would be welcomed.

Damien Cabezas asked about a bill expanding collective bargaining for public employees. Marvin Figueroa commented that there are two bills in discussion and that the bills will likely go to conference. The Governor's office is working with the GA to understand the content differences between the two bills, the budget impacts, and how human resources offices throughout the state will need to be retooled.

Jorge Yinat made comments on the small business study that is designed to identify procurement process issues in state government. Marvin Figueroa replied that Governor Northam wants to codify what has previously been best practices so that any executive orders mandating these best practices will not disappear when administrations change.

Aida Pacheco asked if there is still an Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Marvin Figueroa answered affirmatively, this still exists. Dr. Underwood is holding sessions around the Commonwealth to advance the equity and inclusion goals of the Governor.

Cecilia Barbosa asked about prenatal care Medicaid coverage for undocumented women. Marvin Figueroa replied that currently there is only emergency Medicaid coverage for hospital bills issued for birth procedures and that he will look further into this issue.

#### **Officer Elections 11:35 a.m.**

Candidates for the three Executive Officer positions made statements. Voting proceeded by acclamation given that there was one candidate for each position. The vote was administered by Danielle Campbell.

Chair (Paul Berry): All in favor with none opposed, and no abstentions

Vice-Chair (Karina Kline-Gabel): All in favor with none opposed, and no abstentions

Secretary (Alex Guzman): All in favor with none opposed, and no abstentions

#### **2020 Strategic Planning 11:43 a.m.**

Secretary Thomasson facilitated a discussion on the 2020 Strategic Plan and presented slides (these are available through the VLAB website). She discussed the broader mission of advisory boards.

There was a group discussion on the strategic vision of the board and how to make the most of the time that new meetings allow. There was consensus that the current vision of the Board is still appropriate. Karina Kline-Gabel proposed that “civic” be included in the mission statement, and Aida Pacheco agreed. Alex Guzman asked how closely the mission statement is to those of other advisory boards. The values that VLAB members agreed upon previously and that had been on the former VLAB website will be resurrected and considered at a future VLAB meeting.

Discussion focused on external engagement with stakeholders, board priorities for the future, how priorities overlap with other advisory boards, and how the board wants to shape the engagement and 2020 plan for action. Karina Kline-Gabel and Melody Gonzales are developing ideas for community outreach by VLAB members for consideration at a future meeting. Secretary Thomasson encouraged the board to set goals and devise ways to measure success at the end of that period.

#### **Committee Breakout (working lunch) 12:15 p.m.**

#### **Committee Reports 1:12 p.m.**

Each committee met during lunch and discussed priorities with representatives from relevant secretariats. Summaries from these meetings were given by committee chairs.

**Housing** – Advising the governor to increase the housing trust fund was successful this year. Next year the committee wants to work closely with VAAAB and VAAB and meet directly with the housing committees for collaborative purposes. They discussed future work with Dr. Underwood and how identifying Latinx communities geographically will enable them to expand housing-related public engagement. They discussed a new policy idea that offers state housing vouchers to undocumented individuals and how to invite advocates and subject matter experts to VLAB meetings who have relevant insight into the housing domain.

**Business:** The committee met with Deputy Secretary Robby Demeria and discussed SWaM, procurement processes, driver’s licenses, and the minimum wage. The committee discussed the economic benefits of minimum wage increases. The committee learned that a bill has been introduced to combat wage theft

and requested from Deputy Secretary Demeria if there was an attorney fee provision in the bill. The Deputy Secretary said he would follow up with the board to answer this question.

**Education** – Secretary Qarni met with the committee and described how in-state tuition for undocumented students has moved forward; the G3 program, and retention efforts aimed at Latinx teachers and staff.

**Civic Engagement** – Secretary Thomasson attended the committee that discussed four pressing concerns: need for cultural competency training for state employees; motivating board members to share their experiences as an outreach activity; planning for the next Latinx summit; and voter registration and outreach and education.

**Health** – Secretary Carey shared several positive developments such as eliminating the 40 quarter work requirement for Medicaid eligibility and expanding Medicaid postpartum healthcare support. There continue to be barriers for health professionals from outside Virginia to become eligible to practice or work in Virginia and the committee discussed that with him. Cultural competency and health literacy in medical settings is also something that the committee would like to pursue.

**Final comments and Adjournment 1:38 p.m.**

VLAB conducted an internal survey for members to give feedback on how to improve the meetings. The survey was voluntary and meant to aid the board leadership. Danielle Campbell presented the results that reflected responses from 8 board members. She strongly urged all board members to complete the survey.

Danielle Campbell then presented proposed meeting dates for the remainder of the year. These dates are as follows:

April 24th (as of editing on 4/2/2020 this is now postponed)

June 19th

September 11th

October 2nd

December 11th

Cecilia Barbosa asked for a motion to create a standing Governance committee (it is currently an ad-hoc committee) that would advise the board on policies and practices of the Board, develop new policies for Board consideration, and monitor Board's adherence to adopted policies and practices. Given the lack of time to discuss this item, it was tabled until the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 pm.

Minutes taken by Paul Berry, Secretary